

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are presently pending in this application. However, upon entry of this amendment, only claims 1, 3-10, 12-20, and 22 will remain pending, with claims 2, 11, 21, 23 having been canceled and claims 1, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13, and 17 having been amended without introduction of new matter. Entry of the above amendment and favorable reconsideration are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The indication that claims 8, 17, 21 and 23 define allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. In view of this indication, it is proposed to rewrite each of claims 8 and 17 in independent form, including all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. These claims should now be in condition for allowance.

It is also proposed to amend claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter defined by claims 2 and 21 (effectively re-writing claim 21 in independent form); and to amend claim 10 to incorporate the subject matter defined by claims 11 and 23. It is further proposed to cancel claims 2, 11, 21 and 23 (effectively re-writing claim 23 in independent form). Claims 3 and 4 would each be amended to now depend from claim 1 rather than from canceled claim 2; and claims 12 and 13 would each be amended to now depend from claim 10 rather than from canceled claim 11.

Claims 1-7, 9-16, 18-20 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hutchison IV, et al. (US 5,790,589) in view of Carlson et al. (US 6,366,599).

Upon entry of the proposed amendments, independent claim 1 would define the subject matter of claim 21, including the base claim and any intervening claims. Similarly independent claim 10 would define the subject matter of claim 23, including the base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the Office's indication that claims 21 and 23 define allowable subject matter, independent claims 1 and 10 would be put in allowable form.

The rejection of claims 2 and 11 would be rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

Dependent claims 3-7, 9, and 19-20 would be allowable at least because of their dependence from claim 1; and dependent claims 12-16, 18, and 22 would be allowable at least because of their dependence from claim 10.

In view of the above, it is believed that entry of this amendment would put the application into condition for allowance without introducing new subject matter or raising new issues. Accordingly, entry of the amendments and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

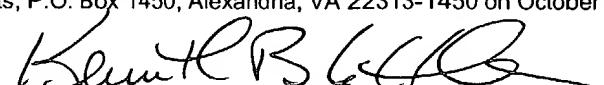
Respectfully submitted,
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Box AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on October 8, 2004.


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